

Walk with Jesus: Welcome Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] I wonder if you've ever joined in a parade. Have you ever been on the street somewhere and! suddenly this crowd's come down with their flags and their banners and you've thought i wonder what! they're parading about i'll just follow along and see and you've kind of joined in at the back just to see what it's all about or perhaps you were invited to be part of the parade or even planning the parade or perhaps you even turned up at the parade with your homemade banner you know the kind of thing whatever we want we want it yesterday and you're going to be actively part of the parade have you ever been part of a parade i reckon that in every crowd or or march or parade or demonstration there will be a mixed group some people are really passionate about the cause and some people are just going along for the day out what unites them all is that they are on the parade they are walking down the street together we are walking with jesus as disciples we are followers and jesus is the leader what is it that makes us all the same we're not all good singers we're not all wise advisors we're not all gifted talkers what is it that makes us all the same we are all forgiven sinners we are not just sinners we are forgiven sinners the lowest depth to which a human can fall is to be a sinner to live in rebellion from and rejection of our god the highest height to which we might aspire is to be a forgiven sinner exactly like the woman of whom we read earlier we are and have been sinners we have lived in selfishness and greed we have gossiped and spoken unkindly about others we have not cared for god's creation but have abused and misused what god has made we have not submitted in obedience to god's word none of us are as bad as we could be but we must admit even if only to ourselves we cannot be described as good we have broken our relationship with our god and we desperately need god to be reconciled to us we all together confess our identity we are sinners in need of grace the good news is that the cross of jesus achieves our reconciliation with god the cross of jesus washes us clean from the stain of every sin the cross of jesus makes us right with god as we walk with jesus then he leads us to his cross and there we are forgiven walking with jesus crucified for us we walk then as forgiven sinners

this identity which unites us all the beautiful story of this woman shows us what it is to walk with Jesus as a forgiven sinner the story begins with Jesus accepting an invitation from a Pharisee come to tea let's have a meal together one of the Pharisees asked him to come and eat with him and he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at table behold a woman of the city who was a sinner when she learned he was reclining at the table at the Pharisee's house brought in an alabaster jar of ointment standing behind him at his feet weeping she wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment at the beginning of this story how do you know who is truly following Jesus it might be Simon the Pharisee he opened his home to Jesus he welcomed him in he prepared a feast for him come and let's have a meal together you can recline at my table no doubt he wants to sit with Jesus and have engaging conversations or is it this excluded woman the Pharisee has a name did you notice the woman isn't given a name someone who comes quietly humbly to Jesus someone who shows love to Jesus in her care for him forgiven sinners sit at the feet of Jesus forgiven sinners offer to Jesus all that they have all that they are and hold nothing back forgiven sinners are willing to serve Jesus wherever they are needed so which of the two do you think is really following Jesus the response to forgiveness is abundant costly generous love you to please and you to know these are my delights below our delights below which we just sung about are to love Jesus in this story the response of love is directed very particularly towards Jesus but today we can't come up behind his feet as he reclines at table no matter how hard we weep our tears will not fall on his feet for us the response of love is an abundant costly generous service of others as a forgiven sinner we show our love for Jesus in giving our time serving tea after the service visiting a neighbour praying for the needs of the world as a forgiven sinner we show our love for Jesus in giving our money supporting community transformation in the poorest parts of the world giving food to the food bank as a forgiven sinner we show our love for Jesus in giving our lives all of our lives in his service

and today that's going to look like serving others sometimes we call this mission and so today in our story we see that mission is nothing less than forgiving forgiven sinners responding to Jesus with generous love love is not a debt we pay love is drawn out from us as our grateful response to the prior love of Jesus when you know that you are a forgiven sinner that you have only been forgiven because your savior loves you what will you not do for him the savior who died to achieve your forgiveness Jesus wants to help Simon the Pharisee and us recognize the reality of forgiveness in the life of this woman as we might expect Jesus tells Simon a parable there was a certain money lender and he had two debtors and one owed 500 and the other 50 when they could not pay he cancelled the debt of them both now which of them will love him more Simon answered the one I suppose for whom he cancelled the larger debt and Jesus said to him you've got the right answer the difference is ten times as much was forgiven Simon judges rightly the one forgiven the greater debt will love the money lender more and Jesus turns to the woman and we can always imagine him taking Simon by the shoulder and saying is that woman you've been criticizing in your thoughts that you've been looking down on and and calling her names do you see her I entered your house you didn't give me any water for my feet but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair you gave me no kiss but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet you didn't anoint my head with oil but she has anointed my feet with ointment so you need to listen Simon her sins which are many are forgiven for she loved much but he who is forgiven little loves little the forgiven woman is aware of the magnitude of her sins Simon does not consider his sins at all if he was asked he would probably say I'm not a sinner I don't have any sin how shall we think of sin and the magnitude of sin many years ago my sister was bridesmaid at a friend's wedding I took my mum down to the church mum wanted to see the bride I wanted to laugh at my sister in the puffy sleeve bridesmaid's dress and it was worth it at the door of the church another of the bride's friends had brought along to see the wedding the bride's dog yes indeed they foolishly decided it would be fun to let the dog off the lead and run over to the bride bound bound paws two big doggy paws right in the middle of the dress

now on a scale it's only two paw prints they're not that big but the magnitude of those two stains on a white bridal dress is huge absolutely enormous it doesn't matter whether your sins are small or big the magnitude the effect of any sin is huge and overwhelming which of these two are lawbreakers someone who murders their neighbour or someone who drives at 25 miles an hour in a 20 zone well they both are they have both broken the law or think about it this way imagine there was a scale a big chart of sin and and and we were able to decide the most serious sin and they were down at the bottom and the ones that we thought weren't so bad are kind of halfway up and then there's those seeds who don't have any sins although they would tell us they do but where is the past mark where on the scale does sin lose its magnitude its horror well that's not on the scale that's in the presence of god comparing your sin to someone else's sin is foolishness trying to judge that one sin is of less magnitude than another sin is unimaginably wrong hear the judgment of god you are in desperate date on account of your sin overwhelming unrepayable date the magnitude of your sin is beyond measure that is what jesus forgave on the cross we are all this woman we have all been forgiven an amount of huge magnitude and that experience of forgiveness should rightly draw from us an abundance of love our response to forgiveness is great and generous love we can never match the bounty of christ's forgiveness we have to learn this we are not loving christ so that we might earn mercy from him when we feel how much we have been forgiven then we give back to him the fuel the energy for our mission for our service of christ and others our forgiveness is our forgiveness responsive love because jesus has washed us clean we give ourselves to him because we love him that we might serve him what will you not do in response out of love for a savior who loves you like this the only ground of forgiveness is the death of jesus on the cross only the death of jesus is sufficient to pay the price of forgiveness to wash away our sin who is it that forgiven sinners trust to forgive our sins

jesus said to the woman your sins are forgiven then those who were at the table began to see among themselves who is this who even forgives sins and he said to the woman your faith has saved you go in peace don't you remember it was just a few weeks ago we had this same question the same objection to the grace of god in jesus remember when the man whose legs didn't work was let down through the roof and the pharisees wanted to start a theological discussion the pharisees and the scribes began to question who is this who speaks blasphemies who can forgive sins but god alone exactly who can forgive sins but god alone no one one so why is it then we insist on trying to do diy forgiveness as though somehow we could forgive ourselves why do we keep on thinking that we can earn god's mercy why do we trust in the opinion of others for our eternal safety who can forgive sins but god alone no one forgive sinners forgiven sinners have learned what it is to trust in jesus only jesus the living word of god can alone speak the living words of life your sins are forgiven jesus the merciful savior does not say to this woman i will never say to you do this first or do that first and then i'll forgive your sins the good news declaration is that in the sacrificial death of christ christ on the cross your sins are forgiven a completed action a completed action it has been done it is finished jesus has done it all jesus the living word of god can alone speak the living words of life your faith has saved you do not misunderstand do not misunderstand jesus knows the gospel better than we do faith is the instrument which god uses to connect us to the death of jesus faith is not something we work up in ourselves so that we somehow earn by our faith anything from god our trust in the cross is enlivened by the work of god within us your faith is always a gift of god it is never something you work up or achieve or make for yourself faith looks up to our father and depends upon his gracious work for us we trust in christ alone we believe in christ alone in christ alone we receive the forgiveness of our sins jesus the living word of god can alone speak the living words of life go in peace we walk with jesus and we find that we are in harmony with god we now live in the wholeness of a renewed intimate fellowship with our father we live as though it were true because it is true we believe the words of jesus more than all the words of the world there is nothing else for us but jesus the true word of forgiveness the true word of peace through jesus christ alone the father dwells in us and we dwell with him

[20 : 22] jesus is our only safe shelter in the storm of guilt and shame the only power which sets us free from cancelled sin we do not desire the empty praise of others we do not depend upon human wealth jesus and jesus only is our treasure crucified risen and ascended jesus wins christ has the victory the kingdom of god is broken out among us and we are called to walk with jesus into that kingdom as forgiven sinners we walk with jesus as those made right with god through his death on the cross we walk with jesus and responding to the forgiveness he has achieved for us we love him and we serve others let's pray together father in these precious moments we pray that you would break upon us the a feeling of the magnitude of our sin what it means for jesus the holy one to take away our sin we pray that you would open our eyes to see the love of jesus for us and transform our lives that we might respond with love to jesus us and display that in our lives of service and kindness and generosity and graciousness be at work among us we pray that the love of christ might be known and seen in our forgiven lives for your glory amen